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MICHAEL STRANGE

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MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

By
Michael Strange

NEW YORK
MITCHELL KENNERLEY
1916

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YOUTH. It is morning,
The early star-sprinkled morning;
Everything drinks and bathes;
The down-flying shadows of birds
Are dimly visible on the faces of brooks
And upon the green shimmer of the trees.
I am moved with a sweet expectation,
A strange half-smiling restlessness.
I too will yearn towards the sun
Like these flowers,
And become more tall
Through my love of this sky.
But now does the beauty of this dawn so fill me
That I long to see its reflected image
In the eyes of another;
To join my voice
To another's hymn of praise;
For my whole ambition is saturated
With a need of searching,
Of turning over stones, of calling in valleys
And listening in deep forests
To the return of my echo in two keys.
I must find the reason for this beating in my pulse
And perceive the vision my smile broods over.
I will undo the fetters of my brain
And allow the fancies that pour from its brim
To rush freely over my life's way

Leaping beyond all possibility
In the very joy of their freedom.
Ah, but I am immeshed, curtailed
By this want of another.

SOUL. You are not alone.

YOUTH. Who is speaking to me?

SOUL. I, your soul.

YOUTH. I do not know your voice?

SOUL. Because until now you have never needed me.

YOUTH. Why do I not see you?

SOUL. Because I am everywhere.

YOUTH. Then lead me, where I wish to go.

SOUL. Where is that?

YOUTH. I want to run fast down a green hill,
To skip, sing, dance and tumble,
To be thrown by that which is by my side
And in turn to crush it to extinction.

SOUL. What shall that be by your side?

YOUTH. The inversion of myself, the weakness of my pain,
The tenderness of my passion,
The — the acquiescence of my will,
A being started from my very limitations
Yet reflecting them, even as high windows give back
The movements of the water over which they lean.

SOUL. You ask too little.

YOUTH. How, too little?

SOUL. You want only a woman.
YOUTH. If these things are a woman — give me one!
SOUL. All things which are not the highest, are small
And therefore dangerous to ask for.
YOUTH. Let us be off, I am impatient.
SOUL. Look about you at the nobility of these trees,
The magnificence of the torrent,
The mystery in those still pools;
They give you what you shall not miss
Until you lose it — peace.
YOUTH. Come! Come!
SOUL. Notice the polish of the foam bubbles,
The glisten of the leaves, the coolness in the grass;
You are one with it now,
The expression of its master-piece — Purity.
YOUTH. I am only praying for charm.
SOUL. Listen to the beating of your heart,
To the throbbing of your blood;
Look at the divinity of your limbs,
They are sculptured from the spirit of health herself.
YOUTH. But I am wanting for strength,
The strength of seven bears
To approach this woman with.
SOUL. And afterwards your excuse will be
That you haven't heard me.
YOUTH. Come, come with me.
SOUL. It is through me only that you shall find her

And because of me, your soul,
That you shall suffer in knowing her.

YOUTH. Ah, it is too hot for riddles,
The earth herself has become pale and sick
With a disease of flowers.
See, they are choking her distress with kisses.
Come, let us go.

SOUL. Go, then.

YOUTH. I hear music.

SOUL. For you now music shall lose all its sadness
And preserve merely its charm;
All words — good, bad, absurd and possible,
All will promise joy only to you,
And only common sense shall become,— a mere word.

YOUTH. What you say
Blows like a draught through the sunshine,
I hear your words
Without being sensible of them.

SOUL. Youth! Youth! how preposterously brave you are
For you do not know the values — in fear.

YOUTH. The music is nearer, and in it I hear
The dancing of slender bodies under light veils.
Ah, I must join in this bewilderment
And toss the confusion that I feel
With my own hands,— over my head!

SOUL. I have drawn aside my hope for you — walk down.

YOUTH. Ah, those loud-tongued black-hued fountains
of despair,
How they gush over me and torture me
With the prickle of their drops!
My soul, where art thou?
But O, I forget on that night so clouded with caprice
The moon herself turned white;
I drew aside the last thin curtain of my reserve
Entering those speckled halls
Where whims spring from the end of fancies,—
Fancies drugged from the very ashes of their decency;
Where fantasy becomes the tool of so grotesque a
scheme
That violence herself slinks off affrighted.
Then did my soul sway like an ended candle
Sinking backwards
Into the shadows behind my footsteps,
While I — rushed forward
Into a strange whimpering sound of music
And saw the ends of sin, and folly
United to their partners, insanity, decay;
Then afterwards thru an odd and all embracing nausea
I tumbled hard upon the earth,
Clung to its roots and quavered at the moon.
So now I wander over frozen ground
That beats my feet less cruelly
Than some screw above my heart,

With all of beauty turned mirage,
And only hardship anchored.
My soul, I am frantic with the need of nursing you.
Return to me as a cut vine does
To the bramble it embraces,—
And I will feed you
With the weeds of my disenchantments and my regrets,
That blossom over the vacancy
My sins have created,
As smoke broods over the village
Its flame has destroyed.

SOUL. I hear your words through the blurred wounds
Your actions have dealt me.

YOUTH. My soul,
I need you far more than life itself.
Promise me only
That you will join me after my death,
And I will drink of its breathlessness
With joy.

SOUL. When youth prefers me to life,
When life becomes far heavier to bear than death,
And death turns a bridge for a meeting,
Then may I raise my head and pursue once more
My end, progression!

YOUTH. You will come?

SOUL. I am within you.
The spring of your tears, the color of your joys,

The nobility of your victories, the reason for your being.
Walk on; your road has won its evenness from Pain.

YOUTH. O life! the beauty of your peace
Is immortality.

MOODS

I

O, THE pain of this summer mood,
The beauty of these too full roses,
And these sounds of a well satisfied nature!
How keenly she throws the looseness of her night caprices
And the languor of her mornings at my starving heart!
Over the garden wall I hear the noises of her harlotry,
And into the garden steals the incense of her freedom
Together with the broad laugh of her abandon;
So that I move slowly overcome with desire,
Longing for the passion that hesitates in its strength
And departs at its zenith;
Longing also to dream something
That is within my reach to have,
And to have that which my dreams cannot exhaust.
Over the garden wall I hear the noise of her harlotry
And the heavy steps of her pleasures.
I long to join in her convulsive pastime,
But my soul forbids.

II

My soul is a well of moods —
Heavy and still from the accumulation
Of its suppressions;
My soul is a well that prays for a stone
To disturb its tranquillity
And torture its depths.
My soul longs to be broken into freedom,
Even as a rock cuts the lethargy
Of old water into which it falls;
So does my soul desire to be mastered
By the sweeping strength of a hard rebellion,
Finding its paradise amongst those regrets
Of very beautiful strange transgressions!

III

REBELLION

Only that I am sad with an ache
That may not burn itself away in temper,
Only because I see too clearly the fruits
Of a distasteful obedience, suppression, delusion,
And am keenly sensible to a soul pity
Which eats away in a moment
The superficial comfort my optimism has grown!
For even as hot-house flowers expire at the touch of a weed,
So is all my artifice washed naked with a tear,
And through one sigh my heart is blown
To the feet of truth — the truth of me
Who am a garbled heroine
Of wandered nights and sleep-sick noons,
Of music fantasy and rhythmic madness,
Of self-denial bordered to indulgence,
And fasts that make a feast of neither food nor wine,—
A one of long looks and deep findings,
Of low voice heavy with timidity and lips backward
From the intensity of the kiss they hold.
For my feet as well as my soul
Are bleeding from the ice on this easy way,
And " everything on earth " is crushing me

Into the "nothing"
On which it rests most easily.—
Such is the song of my rebellion,
The vainness of my regrets,
The sadness of my depression.

IV

What is heavier than my soul at this moment,
Undisturbed by a single tremor,
Unrelieved by a single purpose,
Tranquil almost to unconsciousness?
How I envy the pool's unrest
Broken with the gestures of fish,
The air's currents
Agitated with a thousand sounds,
And the earth herself
Shattered by the evening wind!
Ah, what is heavier than my soul at this moment,
Undisturbed by a single tremor,
Unrelieved by a single purpose,
Tranquil almost to unconsciousness!

V

A sinful mood gallops through my heart,
Heating my pulses unbearably;
I imagine too vividly the delights
Of what I do not will to do,
And that is painful.
My fancies paint strange pictures
Upon the floor of my imagination,
So that my feet are steeped
In what my hands decline.
My body is far more high than my brain
In this moment,
Holding itself aloof from the ravages
Of twin exhausters, soul and mind.
I long and long for the control of my soul.
Would that I could do with it
What I can with my body!
For my soul has looked through the great emptiness
Of every, every star-locked door,
And has even persuaded the musicians to play
Upon the strange forbidden string.
My soul is thin and sharp as the wind,
But powerful as the sweetness
Of all south air.
I long and long for the control of my soul.
Would that I could do with it
What I can with my body!

VI

I am bewildered to the bottom of my thought,
For nothing continues to be the same as the beginning,
The beautiful beginning for which I paid with vows,
Upon the understanding that it would always be the same.
So I have shaken my conscience to the very core of its being,
Since my conscience tried to make me accept life
With a series of make-shifts,
Whispering to my senses that it was possible for them to live
Beneath questions and above facts,
Attempting even the seduction of my soul;
Therefore have I bruised my conscience into insignificance,
Placing my soul over the cry of my heart and the excuse of my head.
But still I am bewildered, shaken to the bottom of my thought,
For nothing continues to be the same as the beginning,
The beautiful beginning for which I paid with vows,
Upon the understanding that it would always be the same.

VII

ENDING

Into my soul has crept a strange invulnerable ending,
As sleep creeps upon fatigue
So has this ending stolen upon my soul,
And like water slowly filling into a void
Has gradually dulled all burning and aching,
With the chill evenness of finality;
Rising also up towards my pulses,
My uneven seried pulses,
Calming the fluttering of their nerves
With a comfort of unconsciousness,
Easing the pain of their insight
With a conception of the infinite,
Curing all by ending — all,
So that I am under the sea
But not oppressed by its weight,
Aware of its lessons
Yet unsurprised by its solution.
Therefore my soul is also at peace with my hands,
For like quarrelling children who sleep suddenly
In the very midst of a dispute,
So have my soul and hand joined minds,
Through the common fate of this ending,
This strange invulnerable ending,
That has stolen upon my being like sleep upon fatigue.

VIII

My soul longs to be stirred,
To be desperately stirred,
Not by love with its swollen-eyed timidity
And damp nervous hands,
Nor by hatred with its storm-tossed mole-hills
And its nasty expressions,
Nor yet by fame with its absurd orchestra
Of ill-tuned trumpets;
But by something Doric,
Seen far above me
Through a line of cypress in a mirage of sapphire,
With crest of beauty on the wave of fever;
Something hard and exquisite
Regal and destructive,
Where my soul could dance
With infinite madness
On its mirrored repressions,
Till all vision
Wavered intensely
In the violent arms
Of a consummate relief.

IX

THE SPIRIT OF LOVE

I am the spirit of love,
The sister of every great sacrifice,
And I play with a golden harp
Strung upon the pulses of all triumphant sorrow.
I play to those hearts heavy
With the burden of growing love,
And to those stretching hands that are faint
From an attitude of deep giving;
I play to the sigh in the heart of man,
To the eye that follows a cloud;
And my music catches the sweet overflow
Of all generously weeping souls,
Turning their glorious weakness
On the shuddering scales of a rare strain
To chisel their tears with immortal gold;
For the sadness of love is a golden grief,
The tears of love are gems among angels,
The joy of love is sun upon God;
And I am the spirit of love,
The sister of every great sacrifice,
And I play with a golden harp
Strung upon the pulses of all triumphant sorrow.

X

THE SPIRIT OF LONELINESS

I am the spirit of tense loneliness,
The brother of a white controlling truth;
And my feet are upon the wind at nightfall,
Lending to it all of ineffable sadness;
It is again my fingers that play through twilight
In the moving mass of figured clouds,
Extinguishing the beams of the dying sun
With the mauve wand of deep silence;
Also I am in the receding tide
And among the shadows of great trees,
I live upon the sigh in the souls of men
And the wistful prayers in the dreams of women;
My only charity is compassion of the Infinite
So driven by that which it rashly drives;
My one stern faith is the ultimate silence
That shall fall upon the pulses of the spirit itself;
My soul-taught love is for the ghost of fancy
Which has never pretended once to be real;
And my only hope is to cease asking
For hope and all her bed-ridden deceits.
For I am the spirit of tense loneliness;
The brother of a white controlling truth;
And my feet are upon the wind of nightfall

Lending to it all of ineffable sadness,
And it is again my fingers that play through twilight
In the moving mass of figured clouds,
Extinguishing the beams of the dying sun
With the mauve wand of deep silence.

XI

THE SPIRIT OF SOUL

I am the spirit of the soul,
The shining tear upon the robe of infintie desire;
It is my nerves that lend to the soul
Those wings for her dreams;
My hands that take her briefly
Through the muddy noise of strident life;
My pulses that stir her blood
With the urgent spirit of sharp enthusiasm;
For I am the blush upon the white rose
Of her strange understanding;
The thrill that relieves the mastering beauty
Of her rare passion;
And the power that blows her
Into the sky where she sits among the gods,
Defying all the schemes of life
To tarnish one star upon the glorious cloak
Of her incomparable beauty;
I am indeed the spirit of the soul,
The shining tear upon the robe of infinite desire,
And it is my nerves that lend to the soul
Those wings for all of her dreams.

XII

My heart is full of twilight loneliness,
It is the hour of regrets
My soul is full of untaken tenderness,
It is the moment of repose.
My mind is full of unanswered questions,
And my fancy is asleep beneath a brim of peace.
My sadness has ceased weeping,
Since its presence is inevitable.
The hands of my spirit are folded
Beneath the flutter of my hopes.
The lamps of my pulses are shaded
With the sound of my tears;
For my heart is full of twilight loneliness;
It is the hour of regrets.

XIII

Have you ever waited
In desperate loneliness,
And utter depression
For the breaking of daylight,
Attending all weary
A ragged procession
Of memory's hours,
Bespattered with tears;
Then opened your window
Out wide toward the morning,
Exultantly breathing
The vainness of hope?

XIV

It is a strange thing to be young,
Yet always lonely;
To be filled with the spirit of the dance
And the essence of dreaming,
Yet always lonely.
It is odd to be continually surrounded
Without any companionship,
And finally thru isolation,
To sneer thinly
At all that one loves
It is strange to be young,
Young and lonely,
To tear away the earth at night
From the colored forms
Of buried treasure;
The glittering treasure
Of midnight reverie
And illustrated dreams,
Yet to finger their gloss
With solitary hands.
So — life becomes bitter,
Sleep cowardly;
The dance falters,
And the smoke — dies.

XV

"CONCESSION"

Over me are creeping clouds,
The very blackest clouds,
The giant, chaotic clouds
Of infinite concession.
I look into the future
And see the years spinning away from me
Like tops, upon a slanting floor of glass;
Then I look backwards
In terror into my soul,
And find it living in the crumpled tent
Of a passing mirage;
When all my nerves cry out, great God!
Why have you given eyes to witness such futility,
Ears, but to be broken by these sounds
That can deny even the gift of madness —
Lips, only to strain and mutter with a curse inadequate?
O! to what end this undemanded gift of life!
And strange answers roll
Beyond the brink of my understanding;
Chasms made of sneering bones
Open to invite my stumble,
Values fly upside-down
Over my head,
Laughing in a witless spite;

And thru the sterile air
I hear the cavilings of my soul
In all the mighty grip
Of a Titanic fear.
Yes! over me are creeping clouds,
The very blackest clouds,
The giant, chaotic clouds
Of infinite concession.

XVI

SUICIDE

Thus spoke I to my soul
And shivered from so speaking.
Behold! Here is the great temptation
With incense for thy hungry nostrils,
Colors to paint upon thy scratchy heart,
And a fast of wine for thy feasts of water.
Take this idea
With a suave promptness,
Even as a lover fingers
The will of his mistress;
Drink deeply
Of this impossible thing,
With thy hands freezing
From a dancing of nerves;
With quickening pulses
That shall touch expiration
Thru a thrall of sinking;
Then shalt thou place merely at thy will
Sea-deep rocks very much higher
Than sky-blown clouds,
Judging the destiny
Of fighting stars,
Playing also
Among those motives

That threaten space
With the massive invasions
Of infinite life.
Thus spoke I to my soul
And shivered from so speaking.
Behold, here is the great temptation
With incense for thy hungry nostrils,
Colors to paint upon thy scratchy heart,
And a fast of wine for thy feasts of water.

XVII

RUN INTO THE FIELDS WITH ME

Run into the fields with me,
The grey windy fields of complete freedom;
And as you pass the well,
Throw into it all your material inheritance!
Do not regret the hot sun,
But learn to warm yourself in the wind.
Neither must you languish after companions,
For your solitude will teach you to find out someone.
Run into the fields with me,
The grey windy fields of complete freedom.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO HAVE LIVED?

WHAT does it mean to have lived? —
To have cried
At the pain of our lot!
What does it mean to have loved?
To have sighed
For the things that are not!
What does it mean to have wrought
some glow
For the gods to inhale?
Only the aching of thought
with woe
That is silent and pale.

So if in this summing of mine
The only adventure is death,
Let us walk thru the sea towards the line
That chokes and dissevers the breath,
To greet the adventure — of Death.

A WOMAN PASSED ME

A WOMAN passed me in the street
With red-heeled shoes on tiny feet,
And face that through a mist of paint
Shone helpless small and almost faint.
The silken tightness of her gown
Caused me to smile and then to frown,
That so much beauty should so bare
Its richness, in such foul night air.
I watched her grace in full delight,
Glad in the dark to find such light;
I framed some word to say to her
(Forgotten slang came back to slur
The strange white meaning of my mind)
Towards this sweet plaything of mankind.
Then clearly spoke a childish voice.
I listened, for I had no choice;
" Come on, why do you wait? " it said
(My heart seemed struck with heated lead).

" They never wait," I heard her say,
In tones with which the angels pray,
" They take and kiss and so pass by."
She ceased and then I heard her sigh,
" So come and take what's left, look sharp "
(Her voice strayed like a broken harp)
And quivered down to meet her tears;
A silence, while my soul grew years.
" Is there not something else," I cried,
" To do for you — to find your pride? "
A stillness, then she laughed —" For this "
(Her fingers pattered like a kiss
Over the covers of her form)
" There is no day after the storm,
The other thing has crossed the ford. . . .
This soul's been serving years — its Lord! "

TO DEATH

COME and take what's left
Of what your brother gave,
Come and play the pipe
That tunes me to the grave.
Try to find a sign
Of what your brother left;
Seek among the rags
And disinter my theft!
Try to find a shade
Of what was there at first;
Discover just a drop
That has not fed my thirst!
Search well among those rooms
Where deeper things are kept;
You'll surely find the mark
Of where my spirit slept,
While body drank of flame,
Enchanted with its shame,
Where words were light as air,
And foulness became fair!
But just before we start,
Uncover all your head
And let me see the aim —
For which my spirit bled.

IT IS A GLORIOUS MOMENT

IT is a glorious moment when we throw away
The inherited bread, with its smug butter
Churned thru centuries in the mould of fear;

It is a great day when we cast aside
The fire on the hearth, for the flame in the soul,
And throw off comfort, to sleep in peace;

It is a splendid thing to widen the sky
With our hope's breadth, and to suck darkness
With the rare appetite for real night.

And yet how sad are all great things,
Sobering, remote as the tops of mountains,
But pure and vivid as all clear air.

WEARINESS

WEARINESS from naught!
Therein the germ can lie,
That makes our serried will
All eagerness to die;
That breaks our serried will
Upon the block of hate,
Beneath a chanting air
Whose motif whines — Too Late,
Beneath a ranting air
Whose motif screams — Undone,
Before I even was —
And Christ! — the race is run.

GRIEF

AND as some ship afloat upon the sea
Of stagnant tides goes sliding, sliding on;
To wonder when the wind will lift her sail
Or if the sun will ever shine again,
So our poor souls go floating, gliding on
Upon the glacial waters of despair,
With hopeless gestures indicate of hope,
To swell the fatal wreckage of the sea.

JANUARY MORNING

I

HOW grey the city day!
How heavy with despair,
The very hush of wind
Is imminent with care.
O! how my spirit fits
The pressure of this sigh
And groans beneath a wish
To vacillate and die!

II

A morning when 'tis dull to live,
And still more dull to die;
A morning when 'tis sad to laugh
And more sad still to cry;
A morning that is grey with mist
And heavy with the rain,
As if the air were drenched in tears
Upon a wind of pain.

DESPAIR

O GOD, let the sound of the crashing sea
Or the breaking boom of the wind
Outsob this cry in the heart of me,
That I may not drown my mind.

That I may not drown my mind, you hear,
In the seething foam of hate,
Nor drink too deep of that fatal sneer
In the valley called Too Late.

In that valley called Too Late, you know,
Where the failures wander thick,
With their archless feet thrust to and fro
In the shadows that are sick.

Where the tangled hum of eternal strife
Falls stiff as the shroud of death
And the veinèd pulse of our very life
Is hushed on the ice fay's breath.

Then, God, let the sound of the crashing sea
Or the breaking boom of the wind
Outsob this cry in the heart of me,
That I may not drown my mind.

THOUGHTS AFTER AN HOUR SPENT IN A CABARET

I HAVE invited you
To dance.
O listen to the music
Swell and prance,
Amidst the wattled glamour
Of disease,
That roars and rattles
Like a can of peas.
Come! come! my blonde,
And hold me very tight,
So that I'm sure your sense
Is very faint and light;
Then we will jog together
Thigh to thigh,
Until the floor splits
And the air is high
With mouldy powder
And with fetid wine;
Until my breath is yours,
And your breath mine.
Eh, listen to the music
Swell and prance
And — I — I have invited you
To dance.

Oh, yes, I have invited you
To dance.
Watch their fat bodies
As they swell and prance
Within the rhythm
Of the last decay —
Those ribald shadows
Of a lost dismay!
But come — the game
Is broadly finished; come!
And let us pinch these shadows
Ere they run —
Life is a madhouse
Where we roar and prance,
And — I — I have invited you
To dance.

SLEEP

TO forget and to be forgotten
Beneath the waving grass,
To wake no more and whisper
Another day — alas!
But just to slumber quietly
Within the arms of sleep,
A dreamless tearless slumber
Which shadows guard and keep;
Blind to the ills of living,
Deaf to the wants of soul,
Forgiven and forgiving
Beneath our tranquil hole;
All done with hopes and rancors,
Farther down than they,
In sleep the sleep unbroken
With lashes closed for aye,
Forgetting and forgotten
Beneath the waving grass,
No more to wake and whisper
Another day — alas.

NEW YORK — ETCHED

THE echo of iron! the drilling of steel!
And from far underneath a din and a clatter,
Man's retching and strain over gain and its matter,
Far down in the street things that mingle and meet
Are dust lifted papers with rushing of feet;
And the ominous sounding of thousands of voices
Aloft, you can't tell if it sobs or rejoices,
For down in the street things that mingle and meet
Are confusion of choices defying defeat,
With a courage that labors unflinchingly keen
For the griping of power and what it shall mean,
For the griping of power and the clutching of law;
Each man is a leader, and hopes to be more
In those buildings that cut the sky into pieces,
Strange columns of thought that each moontide increases;
Whose power plays havoc with even the wind,
Lighting the bay where it meets with the ocean;
Showing the splendor that man has combined
With the forces themselves through his work and devotion
Showing the splendor that man has achieved
In his fruits of rebellion from what was believed;
Those fruits of rebellion that shadow the sun
With a glory untrammelled and copied by none.

The echo of iron! the ringing of steel!
Those bridges that arch for the passing of giants
Joining country and city with iron alliance,
Engaging the world to admire defiance;
How the God of invention has spilled of his wares
On these peaks of a city that builds as she cares,
The mistress withal of gigantic ambition
Still in her travail of mammoth fruition,—
Fruition that urges to strive and to spend
All worth for the joy of attaining an end.
The echo of iron! the blasting of rock!
It breeds up a rhythm of vast syncopations,
A sound of the merging of hundreds of nations,
It's the noise of a forge, the forge of the world —
Where the scheme of the future is being unfurled,
Where flesh-pots are weighed in to simmer and boil
From their ashes being clad the fruits of their toil,
The man of the future, a little of all,
Through his merit to stand by his weakness to fall,
The mouthpiece of wisdom he has not conceived,
The voice of a power that's still unrevealed,
Yea! the voice of a power that shatters the sun
With a glory untrammelled and measured by none.

QUATRAINS

I

WHEN dawn drew my palace in its glow,
My soul cried, Lift thy weariness and go —
Why — whence and whither on — still not to know
Only that thou shalt sleep between despair.

II

Often a lonely wanderer I
Have listened to the wind pass by
And through its weary tension heard
My tired soul's forbidden sigh.

III

Once through the fevered sweetness of a dream
A voice called, mark these memories well that seem
Merely the grotesque circlings of unrest,
These are your truths without your fears between.

IV

O come, sweet friend, and let our step be slow,
Regard the ocean's changing tide below,
Then why to fret at such intangency,
For like this water, so you come and go.

V

I drew your love across the sound of harps,
Strung on a tear of melting winter foam,
That washed my soul in radiant ecstasy,
So may a moment write a finished poem.

VI

If thou wouldst really live
Make tragedy the outpost for thy wit
And laughter the great basis for thy tears,
Thus shalt thou truly victimize the years.

VII

Ah, love, this growing old is very sore
To us who watch the change with youthful souls
And hearts that beat as madly as before
For findings we may seek — through — never more.

VIII

Here is the depth of wisdom, and the star
Of beauty placed together in a jar,
Select O youth a symmetry of grace
And leave the rest to learn what circles are.

IX

Into my hand I drew you as the ground
Draws rain from heaven through its vast suspire,
Just so I warmed your innocence with sound,
Who fell — but from the need of my desire.

X

Ah, love, good-bye at dawning is a word
We lovers well may designate absurd,
Yet final words while still the senses sing
Leave free a song that man has rarely heard.

XI

Last night a sail upon the sea went by
Dressed in the far-off moonlight of the sky;
Poor sail made lonely from a light so high,
And lonely light alone to shine and sigh.

XII

Some shout after a love in wild dismay
Whose tape extinguished spark has flown its way,
While yonder group with folded eyes adorn
Their passive souls eternal neither way.

XIII

O come, my soul has lived a thousand nights
Within a moment's dream of you, beloved,
So let us build this hour of delights
And give our wrongs the title of our rights.

XIV

We lived the splendid golden moment, we
Whose eager lips had tasted many wines —
We drank of love as drowned men drink the sea
Then — tears absorbed your face away from me.

XV

Life is a piece of sophistry, my dear,
Played upon the tangled flutes of fear,
Death the splendid folk-song of contempt
That soars above the jangle life has meant.

XVI

Ah! was it wrong that for a moment we
Tied fast our fears — so that our souls might see
Their true life — rights aflame beneath our eyes
That asked and gave — all that shall never be.

XVII

THE CITY BLOCK

Ten cents to eat, ten cents to drink,
Ten cents to laugh, ten cents to cry;
Ten cents to dance, ten cents to think —
Ten cents to think — then ten to die.

HUITAIN

I

SO came the day of days, the night of nights,
When my unfettered soul was free to speak
Of burdened wishes, and incarnate rights
To plume its wings for the forbidden flights —
Then did I turn to listen for the breath
Of garnered gifts — immeasurably fair.
O love! I did but listen to the air
That blew around a space — where there was — death!

II

SADNESS

Like whispers that are gone before they form,
A message for the object of their will,
Like shadows that are passed before they warn
The subject of their tenderness, until
Some strange and broken radiance of the air
Suggests a heavy weightfulness of care,
And life seems built with pale and broken threads;
Then, sadness takes the helm within our heads.

III

Come, drink your way up to the river's edge,
The 'cello plays too deeply to be borne,
Come, crush life to the image of your soul,
Let night loves shut away the sob of dawn.
Who wants to see the village at the last,
Or mark how ill the germ of life behaves?
Better to stumble blackly on the dark,
Than dying see the sun upon the waves.

SONNET

O TRAGEDY, where is thy golden crest
Or Life, thy merest possibility?
Thou canst not fool me with a mess of dreams,
Against the fatal effigy of truth;
Thou canst not draw a sun across the moon,
The pale sick moon of infinite distress,
Nor fill my cup's deep space with druggèd wine
Against the total bitterness of truth.

" I was " shouts loudly down upon " I am,"
I am, the son of murdered memories
A dancer on a veilèd undertow,
Whose current sings " Be on your way to naught."
O Tragedy, where is thy golden crest,
Or Life, thy merest possibility!

GOOD NIGHT

GOOD night, my strange impassive love, good night.
Dream with your dark forbidden soul of me,
Until the dawn is heavy with your sighs;
Then shall you find me waiting at your knee.—
Then shall you find me waiting at your knee
With stories for the shudder of your whim,
With fancies for the hour stand's caprice
And imagery, to wrap our passion in.

THOSE SINS

LET me outlive, outlive,
Those sins I found through need!
Ah, Christ, forgive! forgive!
My soul faints as I plead;
My soul faints to implore
Forgiveness for its sins,
My brain dies to its core,
That I may sin no more.

MADONNA OF THE EYES

WHAT curious thoughts could give,
So young a head as yours
Such odd and startling poise,
Madonna, pale and slim?

And what rare acts could give
Such thinness to your hands,
Such slowness to your step,
Madonna, without sin?

For there are things in you
That measure just my depth,
Madonna, of the Eyes,
Give me your Truth — and Lies.

OH, HOW YOU HAUNT ME

OH, how you haunt me through and through my days!
Your eyes are like the memory of a mist
That covers up the form of living things,
And clouds all nature in a mystery.

My life becomes a malady of dreams,
For I am sick with pondering on your being,
Weak with conjectures far too strong to name,
Ill from the bravery of my own despair!

SO PASSED THE MOMENT OF OUR LIVES

SO passed the moment of our lives,
Though neither of us knew
That each would give his life away
To pass that time anew.

A life of dreams then came to us,
Built on each other's aim,
Yet sad to say too late we found
That they were both the same.

YOU ARE WHAT I CAN NEVER FIND

YOU are what I can never find,
You play with that I dare not touch,
Did I not love you over much,
My tears had sought another mind.

But, love, the threshold to your door
Holds music of a vaster clue
Than all the other songs heard through.
Your answers make me question — more.

YOUR THOUGHTS

I FEEL your thoughts are stealing back to me
Away from all the jarring earth-alarms;
I know your eyes are closing to recall
The habits of my soul within your arms.

How will it be when consciousness departs,
And Judgment seeks the truth within us two?
Will Justice hold herself, for you who are
More poor through me who am made rich from you?

FOR ALL MY LIFE

FOR all my life
I'd spoken in a tongue I knew not.
And my tongue
The language of my land lay hidden deep
Under the tangled morass of my soul,
Until one day
Of torpid greyness and suspense,
I heard you speak
My way, and answered back
So loudly, but with voice you could not hear.

YOUR HANDS, MY DEAR

YOUR hands, my dear,
I do so love your hands;
For like thin flowers chilly with the dawn
They sway and move among your draperies,
Seeking to hide their pallid slenderness
With modesty for such enchanting form.

THE DRESS

THE dress I wore so happily
Amidst the crowded tumult of your praise,
I wear again, how differently dull
Alone with just the memory of those days.
That charming song of yours
I play again enclosed with candlelight,
And how its chords inflame my loneliness
With longing that burns sharply through the night.
So if upon these swooning summer-nights
Your sweet suspended dreams I enter not
With heaven-raked allurements for our love
Then, Sweetheart, I deserve to be forgot.

AIMS

TO treat full kindly all most foreign things
And have no sense of value small enough
To force against another's argument.

To have a faith that brothers all of faith
So widely that it comprehends the joy
Of meeting God throughout the city's dust.

So to live calmly, silent through the din,
With organized impressions of the trend
Our soul repasses towards its fairest end.

TO NELLIE

WITH your eyes that are never quite free from tears,
And your voice that is always bright,
With your hands that move like a restless bird,
Winging its way in fright!
With a soul that sings
Of such tragic things,
Through that tiny shell of yours,
That one asks how long
Before such a song
Will break up the life it brings!
Then one wonders awhile
How such senses fit
With your greyish threadbare life.
For your song is the song of the God of Chance,
With the joy gone out of it.
The secrets are many your eyes propose,
Sweet woman of lonely reign,
And the seasons shall blow your headstone down
Before man shall have guessed your fame.

SOLDIER'S DEATH

I CALLED your name, beloved mine,
In blessing as I fell.
I took your head between my hands,
And kissed your dear lips well.
I heard your voice so clear and sweet
Above the shell,
You stooped and murmured thus to me
Above that noise of Hell.

I love you so — God hold your soul
Until my soul is free,
That we may bow together
At His omnipotent knee.
He knows my love for you is wide
As all the sea —
Then pray He let us go our way
Together — you and me.

A silence that was vivid gold
Of pure untrammeled prayer —
And then a sound of rising wind
Upon the clear-cut air.
A sound of wind that bore a voice aloft
Immensely fair —
A voice that granted freedom to
Those souls who really care.

THE MORE I LIVE

THE more I live, the more I fear not death
But life, and the strange intimacy of 't,
Those ties we forge in momentary will
That last forever and beyond that time,
Burning beneath the surface of our soul
A sore quite depthless for it shows no mark.
Then all that we have learnt to lean upon
Like heaven, and the weary dread of hell
Become so juggled, that at length we find
A little of the other in each one.

TO-DAY

TO-DAY, spun moments on a golden loom,
We two, together in an antique room
Did stir the dust upon another age,
And finger grace amidst an ancient gloom,—
A gloom through which the organ notes arose
Upon a gentle cadency of sighs —
Sweet sighs with all the eulogy one knows
For love — that brooding spirit of surmise.
And as I gazed beneath the imagery
Of Persian flowers on a painted screen,
Their beauty breathed so rare a sorcery,
My life ebbed to the echoes of a dream,
A dream towards which I looked vaguely distressed
From out the garden of a rare delight
In wonder at the heavy-laden plight
Of souls who lived so vainly, sorely, prest,
Until your voice,— or was it mine perhaps? —
Undid the silence like a sad refrain;
Until your hand touched mine beyond the lapse
Of memory,— I had forgot my pain.

YOUR EYES

YOUR eyes have all the Eastern subtlety
Of crime, and passion's exquisite misdeeds;
Beneath their tense and lazy scrutiny
I sense a pool to which a fountain leads;
A pool so secret and so strangely deep,
That all my soul stands quivering before
The mad desire to descend and sleep
Beneath this pool whose current sings (no more),
Beneath this pool whose current sings and sighs,
Behold I am the very spool of death;
O come to me all you whose spirit cries,
And I will cure you with a truth for lies.

I WAKE IN WEARINESS

I WAKE in weariness
And fall asleep in tears.
Tell me, is this life's measure
For all the future years?

For if it is, my dear,
Then I will have no more
Of this deep ache of mine
So deep, so sad, so sore.

Then will I go to meet
The dawn below the sea,
And watch the bubble rise
That once was breath — of me.

WHEN YOU COME TO ME

WHEN you come to me
I shall lay aside my pen
And put away my book
For ever.

When you come to me,
I shall open the window,
Kissing the white sill-ice
With love.

When you come to me,
I shall dust the room gently
Pinning roses along the wall
For light.

Dressing
Thru a lure of moonbeams,
To the stir of roses,
When you come to me!

YOU ARE THE IMPOSSIBLE

YOU are the impossible,
And I worship you through a veil of passion
With fanatic hands.

You are the unattainable,
Yet I look at you with hungry nerves
And violent eyes.

You are the inevitable,
Yet I gaze upon you with strange terrors
And odd submission!

For you are the dancing
Of my singing pulses,
And the fragrant sob
Of my very beautiful despair.

O you are the impossible,
And I worship you through a veil of passion
With fanatic hands.

IT comes with rushing worship,
And leaves in blinding pain
Like the tossing wind of Autumn
With its breakage after rain,
Like the dancing wind of Autumn
With its cry more sad than sane.

It comes with strangest tension,
Remains in sharpest woe,
Like a violin's suspension
On some note profound and low,
Like an agonized suspension
On a violin's taut bow.

But, ah, how it enchants us
With its golden puissant gloom,
Its blood-stained threads that wind us
Through its mad immortal loom,
Those blood-stained threads that bind us
In a strange fantastic room.

And who of us would change it
For the calm of deep dead seas,
Or sacrifice its madness
For the peace of prayerful knees,
Or capitize its sweetness
For the calm of deep dead seas.

So we'll not stay regretting
Those dreams we could not live
Nor grudge the pain of letting
Our heart's blood thru a sieve,
Nor curse the shame of setting
Our soul where naught could live.

For we are buds of grieving
On the flower of despair,
And we forge our way believing
That life is fine and fair;
Yes, we forge our way believing,
And clutch the pale thin air.

CAN IT BE?

CAN it be that I shall love you like this,
And never know you?
Can life possibly continue to exist
Amidst such frustration?
For surely your dreams are blocked with the stuttering
Of my inept expressions.
And when you passed me, have you not felt the tension
Of my leaning soul?
Then surely you must have seen the restless daze
Of my unsteady eyes.
O can it be that I shall love you like this
And never know you?

DISEASE

WE are all divers in a pearl fishery,
We rebellious seekers into the meaning of motives;
Like divers in a pearl fishery
Who sink deeply after sick oysters,
Bringing up the result of their labor —
A diseased product — the priceless pearl.
So we sink profoundly down
Amidst the awe of real findings —
Down into the sick nerves
To the keen pulse of thoughtful men,
Knowing we may catch there
Among those strange sensitive depths
The one treasure — a great brain —
Finding out again that disease is priceless.

WHAT IS THIS MONSTROUS DELIRIOUS OBSESSION?

WHAT is this monstrous delirious obsession —
This lead-colored, jade-fluted craving
That bothers my pulses with a twitching pain?
Is it your lips I want or the worship of your soul?
Do I crave to watch the slow unfolding of myself
Upon those strange mosaics of your untutored senses?
Or do I want you! you! to cover my contempts —
With the deep blurring of abandon;
For your voice bruises against the tenor of my thoughts
With a consuming sound,
Your eyes exasperate the pleasure among my dreams
And your lips — but I cannot think of them
And hold my sanity.
What is this monstrous delirious obsession,
This lead-colored, jade-fluted craving
That bothers my pulses with a twitching pain?

I SAID GOOD NIGHT TO YOU

I SAID good night to you — and walked away,
But I felt like turning, with mad sharpness,
My eyes' wish on to your eyes,
So finding out
What you really were meaning,
I said good night to you and walked away.
But I felt like holding you up abruptly
Towards my lips to see if your lips
Would tremble and open against the scorch
Of my intense breathless flaming.
I said good night to you — and walked away.
But I felt like bruising your flesh with mine,
Like twisting your lips with odd agonies,
Like moving your soul towards strange abandons;
Yet I said good night to you — and walked away.

IN MY GARDEN

I SAT in my garden
That is bounded by a marble snake,
And flanked by purple cypresses
With yellow fruits weighting them down.
I sat in my garden
Where the flower-beds are filled
With colored waters where one bloom
Floats strangely.
I sat in my garden,
Bathing my soul in deep silence,
And noticed the unsteady walking
Of a sleepy dove.
The night grew profound and more profound,
Yet I watched its trade with unwinking eyes,
Seeing well the great shallowness
From where I sat, aloof in my garden.
I looked up once for diversion
And saw in the starlight a vague pageant
Of men's emotions floating gently
Down, down towards my garden;
Threading them through these varied emotions,
Like a string from which the beads dangle,
Were the tears of life — a blue fire
Running the gamut of every nerve.
Around them spun the futilities of life,
Vainly, wildly trying to pierce
Their dark truth for an ephemeral instant;

Like fire-flies they were thinking to destroy
A great night with a little flame.
Then did I see the hopes of men
Flying like swallows across the moon
And I heard their balance
Destroyed in space.
Then also came the loves of men
Sprawling all over the paths in my garden,
Playing like kittens with a worsted ball,
Stumbling, rolling head over heels,
Yet righting themselves — with a frantic eye.
Then did I see the thoughts of men
Play like lightning over my garden,
Burning its depths with a sullen glare —
A strange complete ominous glimpsing
Of all that which has no day.
The night grew profound and more profound,
Yet I watched its trade with unwinking eyes,
Seeing well the great shallowness
From where I sat, aloof in my garden.

APHRODITE

O APHRODITE!
The columns of your temple
Are the beams of my heart;
Your colored pavements
The flowers of my passions;
Your leaping roof,
The very dome above my soul!
I breathe towards you
In the warm still nights,
Thru the playing fingers of Eros
Who is jealous of my desire for you,
For you, Aphrodite!
Who possess the strange abandon of the last flower,
And the challenge for all over-ardent seekers
In your death-colored eyes.
Listen to my worship
As you listen to those flowers
That riotously break their buds against the wind,
Smiling at the rash charm
Of so vain a sense —
A sense that dares to hope
It may inflame you
From the powder of its sparkling charge,—
You, O Aphrodite,
Whose soul shines thru the marble
Of your high contempt
Like some far light with all the sea between.

SPRING

SPRING full of virile curiosities
For strange unsteady visions,
Paved with petals
Of invisible blossoms,
Filled with the sobbing
Of an untried bow.
Eagerness and fright,
Fright and weakness,
Stirring together the sweets of our soul,
Brewing sharp pains
And soft indecisions,
Urging disclosure
Of what we subdue.

TO-NIGHT COMMENCES THE CITY SUMMER

TO-NIGHT commences the city summer,
A pedestaled labyrinth of yellow lights
Tossing their shadows upon dark pavements.
A mixed myriad of yearning music sounds,
Addressed to later possibilities,
And uneven voices
All in the singular rhythm of passion.
The night air is both light and heavy
With laugh and desire,
Both fresh and stale
With changing comprehensions,
Both wrong and right
Through the contours of heritage.
All the windows are wide
And souls are touching the earth,
Mingling their needs, suffering their pleasures,
Digging their contempts —
For to-night commences the city summer.

SISTERS

I LIVE in the North,
The strange contracted North,
Filled always with the ecstasies of suppression.
I dream through fogs
Among an even consonance of shadows,
Where no one dares look upon the path they follow.
My song rolls backwards,
Pressing sharply into pleading nerves
Straining my soul almost to extinction.

I live in the South,
The languid sun-crowded South,
Full of passionate loose-lipped laziness.
I'm all of my wish,
Therefore my sleep is vacant of dreams,
And my waking uncovered with blushes.
There are no thoughts
At the bottom of my soul.
For my soul is a fountain — at which every one drinks.

LOOKING INTO LAKE COMO AT MIDDAY

SUPERLATIVE essence
Of every soft color
Mixed in with the water
And shadows of boats.
Ignorant laughter,
Almost a singing,
From people who guess not
The scent of their sight.

SIENA IN MAY — EVENING

MASSES of memories,
Riotous colorings,
Circling byways,
All violently grand.
Smells of the night,— Spring
Oppressed with decaying.
The past and the future
Both linked in a mood.

LISTEN TO ME WELL

LISTEN to me well, for you shall never hear me,
My soul is emaciated from my longing for you,
My heart is pale with the monotony of longing,
My nerves scared from the clutching of fancy,
And my hands thin, thin from clasping a dream —
Have you never heard me beneath my silence
Fighting through the waves of my passion for you,
Clasping at the straws of my control with terror
Lest the tide destroy your ignorance, love!
Ah, listen to me well, for you shall never hear me.

AND IF

AND if ——
To-morrow in this vastly deep
Trough of the sea, I sink to find my sleep
Beneath some mammoth hemorrhage of waves,
I who have sought the kiss that spirit craves
Choked under, by a thunder-pressing feast
Of water, I who sought so for the wine
To make my blood sing, as my spirit fleeced
The truth, from Life's impediment of grime!

Think not of me as one who bade farewell
In sadness or with the most least regret,
For I have suffered more than death could tell
Of pain, at the poor way which life is set.
So let no love for me weep at the name
Of one whose soul from life was growing lame.

MISUNDERSTANDING

I

YOU stood before me like a flower
Oppressed by the moon.
Your lips moved faintly,
Yet I heard no sound;
Your eyes were obscurely raised
To some shrine among your dreams,
And your hands were prest severely
Against one another.
I wanted to call, to rend your dreams
To crush your hands, to kiss your eyes.
Somewhere a clock chimed,
A rose fell from a crowded vase,—
Then hope fled suddenly
And I — I went away.

. . . . . .

II

The door closed; we were left alone,
And a tempest froze my heart
Into uneasy silence.
A sun melted my bounding words
To insignificance;
A mad light blinded me
With awkward fevers;
What could I say to you
Whose tongue was caught
In such a net of flame?
How touch you
Whose hands were stuttering
Under a new and terrible weight?
How hold you — I a conquered nothing!
The door closed — and I was left alone.

" OPINIONS "

A MAN once said to me, " I could have been great,
Had I not been ground in the mill of details,
Gushed over by the spittle of meanness
Until my frantic soul hemorrhaged its dreams
Into the waste heap of total concession,
Dying in an agony of unclean air! "

A woman once said to me, " I could have been good,
Had my flesh been unbartered till my mind was ripe,
If I had not promised what I did not know;
I could have faced the calamity of changing convictions
Ascribing to nature that which is natural,
Instead of cursing my bed and dreading my dreams."

A child once said to me: " What fun to leap
And dance on the sun-beams
That cover the ocean in a crash of gold,
Thinking of nothing but the joy of pushing
Through the bright sun-water, up to the sky."

THERE IS NO HAPPINESS OF CONTENTMENT IN MY HEART

THERE is no happiness of contentment in my heart,
And I laugh
Only because tragedy is beautiful;
Neither do I cry because life is sad,
But only because misery is ugly;
And again I do not live at all because life is possible
But merely because dreams are true.
O there is no happiness of contentment in my heart,
And I laugh
Because tragedy is so beautiful.

OBSESSION

I OFTEN said to myself,
What is an obsession?
And my soul shook its head in negative comfort,
Knowing that it had none.
But I still wondered
What is an obsession,
What can it be like to have one
Tugging at one's pulses?
Then one day,
Like the siren on an ambulance
Which sounds its warning and arrives
Almost simultaneously,
It came rushing,
Tearing into my life
With a crushing gasping strength.
It seemed to me first
To have the eyes of Life,
Then I saw
It had the pallor of Death,
Then all I felt
Was a terrible torture.
And doors closed
With a loud banging
Upon those corridors
I had walked through freely
In all the contentment
Of huge ignorance.

X107

And I was left
Alone with this thing,
In a heavy nightmare
Of tangled drumming,
Leaning against
A crooked mirror
Of frightful, frightful mad reflections.
It was then I saw
Almost extinguishing
My life thru gazing,
The frantic eyes
Of a Consummate Obsession.

A POEM TO POETS

WE are an unhappy lot,
We guessers after the infinite,
And we run naked amuck through the halls of truth
Bleeding like pigs from the pricks of real experience;
Jolting roughly against recognized mysteries
With incredulous shoulders;
Running our fingers into the sky
To sample its virtue;
Digging under wells to water our souls;
Investigating even the air
With the scepticism of curiosity.
No wonder our grace has gone
Into the abyss with our rhyme,
And we can no longer conceal
The wounds of our vast perceptions
With any bandage of irony,
Or carry off our great tears
On the sand-bar of wit.
For we are sea-divers,
Not fountain bathers,
And we bring up blood not coral;
Still (and here's the saddest)
Wondering which is the best.
For we are an unhappy lot,
We guessers after the infinite,
And we run naked amuck through the halls of truth,
Bleeding like pigs from the pricks of real experience.

THE BRITTLE MOUNTAIN

I AM climbing alone on a brittle mountain
And below are the rabble singing rag time;
If I fall my bones will die fighting
Amidst their wretched rabbits' runs;
But if I get to the top of the mountain —
(It's only brittle going up)
My soul shall love the things surpassed
With clear, even, passionless loving;
Then shall I cry to the whirling clouds:
Behold, behold, I no longer hate
The slippery ice of the rabble's friendship,
Or the maskèd heat of their mauling passion;
For I have found the massive road,
The road that leads beyond myself,
Where crooked fingers can't touch me
Or nasal voices rasp my balance
With cavilling praise for all unripeness;
And I have found the great loss,
The loss of self, oh, pomp-struck rabble!
So that I love you, truly I do
For the yawning ditches you've made me jump.
Yet — here I am still on this brittle mountain
And below,— are the rabble singing rag time.

FANCIES

WHAT monumental fancies have sat swinging
Upon the crowbars of my conventional existence,
Tossing roses upon stones,
And attempting to demolish the law with grace.
So have my fancies sat swinging
Upon the limitations of my inheritance,
Singing of truth into the ravenous teeth of hypocrisy,
Calling aloud to me —
To me a heap of worn-out languors,
To join them and fly up into the naked air
And on, up to the pallid gates of the giddy moon;
There to walk thru forests of cypress,
To a pale temple of thin columns
Where the nerves are worshipped
And the soul unstrung.
O if my feet were as strong as my will
How I would have hurt the air in my rush
Towards these bright sinister cravings
With their broad suggestions and their singing prophecies.
But my feet, my feet are sick from bathing
In the depthless abyss of tense suppression,
And they can no longer carry me into those fields
Where freedom ruffles the hair of the wind,
Where love heats the rays of the sun
With hot strange enigmatical fingers.

Ah! what monumental paramount fancies have sat opposite gaily swinging
Upon the crowbars of my conventional existence.

THE CITY LIFE

THE city life moves sharply along
Upon its pivot of noise and nervousness
With the staccato tread of marked effeteness
Amidst the glamour of transitory expression;
Its air smote with the ugly dust
Of ambition's momentary flights,
Its sky-line appalled through the uneven yearning
Of all men for a little nothing,
Its pavement hard from the trampled hate
Of all more than weary walking,
Its whole atmosphere stale with the scent
Of passing farce and vapid ending —
So does the city life move sharply along
Upon its pivot of noise and nervousness
With the staccato tread of marked effeteness
Amidst the glamour of transitory expression.

THE NORTHERN SUMMER

OH, the deep green of this Northern summer
How it flatters my soul with evasive dreaming,
Touching my wisdom, my winter wisdom
With the hot dancing feet of abandon,
Calling to me, to my arid pulses,
To beat again thru this mass of blossoms,
To sigh once more in the lure of moonlight,
To race again with the hounds of joy;
And its voice steals up like broken music
To where I stand, with my faded passions,
To where I stand, with my stifled visions,
Looking through tears at the summer valley,
At the deep sweet green of the Northern summer
That flatters my soul with evasive dreaming.

THE CLOCK STRUCK UPON THE BLUE JUNE AIR

THE clock struck upon the blue June air
And I gazed deeply at an orchid in my button-hole,
At the deep mauve of a blue-veined orchid
While the clock struck upon the blue June air.
Then suddenly thru an intense silence,
The hot silence of summer mid-day
My eyes flared back, and I felt profoundly
The ultimate grace of cosmic Youth,
I felt it crowding behind my walking,
Pushing my soul thru great arenas —
Towards the arc-lights of vast conception
There to mate with the moving truth.
The clock struck upon the blue June air
And I watched the sun, the blond bright sunlight,
Dancing sharply among the tree tops
While the clock struck upon the blue June air.

"CREDO"

I BELIEVE in beauty,
the white burning of man's soul for the wildly incredible;
I believe in truth,
man's moving rebellion against the stationary fiction of moralities;
I believe in love,
the strange binding of our nervous ecstasies into the volume of life;
I believe in hatred,
the heaving discord of our creative insight beneath the back waters of satisfaction;
I believe in life,
that vast panting arc-light between our momentary extinctions;
And I believe in death,
the great wind-sheet of transitory affliction and Eternal Birth.

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